ATLAS

MYSTERY TALES

MYSTERY TALES

OCT.
NO. 16

10¢

DON'T MISS THESE MYSTERY TALES

HORROR!

CHILLS!

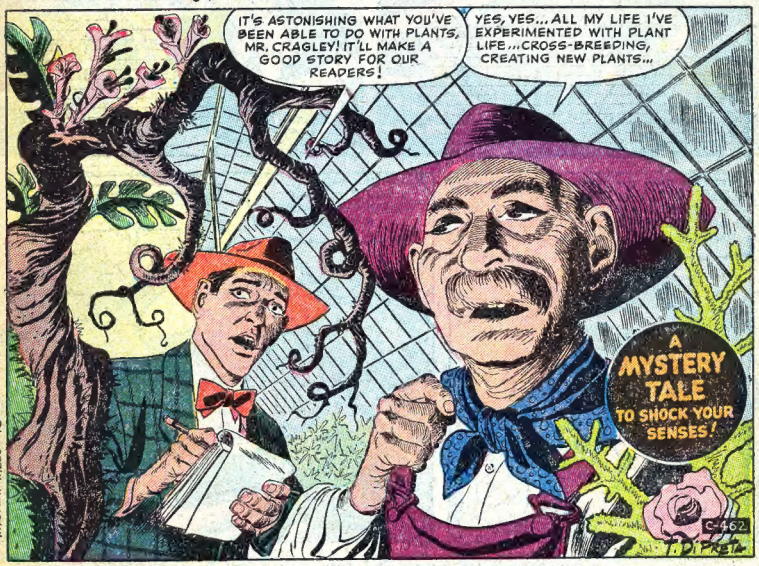
SUPERNATURAL!

"BRING BACK MY FEET!"

ON SALE MONTHLY

GREETINGS, GATES! TO START OFF, WE HOPE YOU'LL ENJOY A BRIEF VISIT WITH US INTO MR. CRAGLEY'S HOTHOUSE, WHERE FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING! BUT THE OLD MAN'S EXPERIMENTS WITH PLANT LIFE PRODUCE SOME MIGHTY STRANGE SPECIMENS, ESPECIALLY ONE *YOU* WOULD SAY JUST *COULDN'T* BE!

WILFRED TAKES A... WIFE!


IT'S ASTONISHING WHAT YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO WITH PLANTS, MR. CRAGLEY! IT'LL MAKE A GOOD STORY FOR OUR READERS!
YES, YES... ALL MY LIFE I'VE EXPERIMENTED WITH PLANT LIFE...CROSS-BREEDING, CREATING NEW PLANTS...
A MYSTERY TALE TO SHOCK YOUR SENSES!
C-462
MYSTERY TALES

WELL... WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR GREATEST EXPERIMENT... THE ONE OF WHICH YOU ARE MOST PROUD?
I...I CANNOT REVEAL THAT! IT IS SOMETHING...
FATHER! COME HERE!

DOWN THE LONG CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE ROW UPON ROW OF WEIRD PLANTS WENT THE OLD MAN, THE DEMANDING VOICE OF HIS SON DROWNING THE SOUND OF HIS CLICKING HEELS...
WHAT TAKES YOU SO LONG, FATHER?
I'M COMING, WILFRED... I'M COMING!
WHAT IS IT, SON? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I MUST SPEAK TO YOU, FATHER...ABOUT SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT... IMPORTANT TO ME!
I'VE BEEN HERE, RUNNING THIS BUSINESS FOR YOU FOR MANY YEARS! ALTHOUGH IT IS A PROSPEROUS BUSINESS, AND WE ARE NOW QUITE WEALTHY, I HAVE BECOME VERY LONELY...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
IT IS SIMPLE... I WANT TO GET MARRIED! I WANT A WIFE!
A--A WIFE...! NO...NO... IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!
IF YOU REFUSE ME, I WILL NO LONGER TAKE CARE OF THE BUSINESS! YOU'RE AN IMPRACTICAL MAN, FATHER, AND SOON THERE WILL BE NO MORE MONEY! YOUR PLANTS WILL ROT... WITHER...
MY--MY PLANTS! THAT MUST NEVER HAPPEN! I WILL HELP YOU!
GOOD! NOW YOU'D BEST TAKE CARE OF THE CUSTOMER...

I WOULD LIKE TO PLACE A LARGE ORDER FOR FLOWERS, BUT BEFORE I DO, I WANT SOME INFORMATION ON PRICES!
FOR THAT, MISS, YOU MUST SPEAK TO WILFRED...
ALL DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE CUSTOMER, WILFRED CRAGLEY'S EYES GLITTERED WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION... AND AS SHE LEFT...
SHE—SHE IS THE ONE, FATHER...! HURRY AFTER HER... ASK HER FOR ME!
I—I DON'T SEE WHY SHE SHOULD ACCEPT YOU, WHEN SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW YOU... BUT I'LL TRY!
MISS! MISS! WAIT A MOMENT! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!
IT WAS AN UNUSUAL CONVERSATION... THE ONE BETWEEN JOSEPH CRAGLEY AND MARY CRANE... BUT NO MORE UNUSUAL THAN MARY'S RESPONSE TO JOSEPH'S FLUSTERED REMARKS...
Y-YOU SEE... WE'RE OLD-FASHIONED PEOPLE... WILFRED AND I... AND HE ASKED ME TO SPEAK FOR HIM...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANY MORE, MR. CRAGLEY! I'D BE HAPPY TO MARRY YOUR SON!
YOU WILL? OH, I KNOW YOU WILL MAKE WILFRED SO HAPPY, MISS! AND YOU... YOU'LL HAVE EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED!
I'LL COME BACK AND SEE YOUR SON ALONE TONIGHT... AS HE ASKED...
STRANGE FOR A GIRL TO ACCEPT A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE FROM A MAN SHE DOESN'T KNOW? MAYBE... BUT NOT FOR A GIRL WITH MARY CRANE'S MOTIVES...
THE DUMB SAP! ONCE I GET MY HANDS ON HIS MONEY, HE WON'T STAY MARRIED TO ME FOR LONG!
3

THAT NIGHT MARY CRANE RETURNED TO THE GREEN-HOUSE...TO THE PLACE OF WEIRD SHADOWS...
NO WONDER THAT OLD GUY AND HIS SON SEEM HALF-NUTS! THIS CREEPY JOINT...
THEN...FROM FAR DOWN THE CORRIDOR...WHERE A TINY PINPOINT OF LIGHT OUT-LINED WILFRED, STILL SEATED BEHIND HIS DESK... A VOICE CALLED...
I AM HERE, MY DEAR! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU WERE!
I WAS ALMOST AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T COME!
THAT--THAT TREMENDOUS PLANT...IT'S FRIGHTENING! WHAT IS IT?
THAT'S NOTHING, MY DEAR! MERELY ONE OF MY FATHER'S MANY EXPERIMENTS! BUT COME AROUND HERE BESIDE ME! IF WE'RE TO BE MARRIED WE SHOULD KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER!
ALL--ALL RIGHT, WILFRED...
IT WAS BUT A FEW STEPS AROUND THE DESK... BUT THOSE STEPS WERE THE BORDER LINE BETWEEN REALITY AND SHEER TERROR...
YOU...YOU... AHHHHHH!
I--I'LL NEVER MARRY YOU, YOU MONSTER!
YES, YOU WILL, MY DEAR... YES, YOU WILL!
SOME PREMONITION OF DANGER MADE MARY CRANE TURN, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE...
AIEEEEE!

THE GAPING MAW OF THE GIANT PLANT CLOSED OVER THE FIGURE OF MARY CRANE...AND SOON SHE WAS GONE FROM VIEW...

MINUTES PASSED, AND WILFRED LOOKED ANXIOUSLY AT THE PLANT! THEN THERE WAS A SLIGHT MOVEMENT, AS THOUGH A WEIRD GROWTH WAS STRIVING TO BREAK THROUGH.

SECOND BY SECOND IT GREW... PUSHING UPWARD OUT OF THE VITALS OF THE BOTANICAL FREAK...

...UNTIL IT WAS FULL-GROWN...

LOOK AT ME!... I'M PART OF THE PLANT ITSELF! WHAT HAVE YOU **DONE** TO ME? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?

I HAVE MERELY TAKEN YOU FOR MY WIFE, MY DEAR, AS YOU AGREED! YOU CAN BE BESIDE ME...ALWAYS! FOR, AFTER ALL, I CAN NEVER LEAVE THIS DESK...

FOR A PLANT CANNOT MOVE, AS YOU WILL DISCOVER!

NO! NO!

YES... WILFRED CRAGLEY--HALF-MAN, HALF-PLANT... HIS FATHER'S GREATEST EXPERIMENT... NOW HAD TAKEN FOR HIMSELF A WIFE...!

THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

I WAS A CLOCK!

HE owned the biggest clock shop in this town in Hungary, and he had many customers, because his fame as a watch and clock craftsman was spread far and wide over the countryside by his satisfied clients. His name was Hugo Uticek. Hugo was in his early thirties and a fairly handsome man. Anyway, he was handsome enough for the pretty, young Greta to fall in love with him. Hugo loved Greta also, but he still was too shy to propose marriage. If he had not been so sensitive and bashful, he might never have gone through the terrible ordeal which befell him. He would have been a happily married man instead of a sorrowful But I am getting ahead of my story.

Naturally, a girl as beautiful as Greta had many suitors, not the least persistent of whom was the rich, vicious Otto Korak. Otto owned a successful export company. He was already a man of about forty-five, and had never been married. All his efforts had been devoted to becoming rich and successful. Well, Otto had attained his goal all right! And now he could look around for a wife to take care of the new mansion he was having built. His eyes fell on the charming Greta, and Otto was determined that she should be his bride, and no other man's! But when he asked Greta to become his wife, Greta thanked him politely for the proposal but turned him down. She loved Hugo, she told him.

This refusal enraged Otto, but he said nothing. He had other means of disposing of rivals, whether in business or personal matters. His first step was to discover who the man was with whom Greta was in love. Her frequent walks with Hugo Uticek the clockmaker and their weekly attendance at the dance in the town hall revealed to Otto what he wanted to know. Hugo was his rival in love and the one he must get rid of. With Hugo out of the way, permanently, Greta would have no choice but to accept Otto's flattering offer of marriage.

Otto was the kind of man who tried to buy off his rivals first. To his way of thinking, money "talked". He felt that every man had his price. So first he would try this method with the young clockmaker. Otto paid a visit to Hugo's shop one morning. He was glad to find the shop empty except for its owner. One thing about Otto . . . he never beat around the bush. He told Hugo frankly that he would pay him a small fortune if he would sell him his shop, its complete contents, which Otto could get rid of in his export business . . . and Hugo must further agree to leave Hungary permanently. He was not to contact anyone in the town after his departure. Hugo looked at the older man for a moment and then burst into laughter!

"You are really too funny, Herr Korak!" he said. "Do you really think I would give up my profitable business . . . the work I love and enjoy doing . . . and leave the country, just because someone offers to pay me more money than the business is actually worth? It is really something to laugh at!" And Hugo laughed even louder than before.

"Don't think you are fooling me," Hugo continued. "Greta has told me of your marriage proposal. You know you don't have a chance with her unless I am out of the picture! So you are trying to get rid of me! Well, your evil plan will not work!"

Otto cursed his young rival. He admitted that Hugo had hit on the reason for his offer. That was another thing about Otto. Once a man guessed the intentions behind his plans, he admitted everything. But that did not stop him from pursuing his plan. He just changed his methods of operation! And with Otto Korak, the method used after the offer of money was turned down was completely direct and effective! This alternate method was to *kill* his rival! Yes, Otto had more than one murder on his conscience, so he might as well add another one to it!

The two men were standing near Hugo's work table, on which rested the tools he used in his trade. With a quick movement, Otto picked up a heavy cutting tool and imbedded it into Hugo's brain in one violent blow! Hugo fell to the floor, dead! Fearing that someone would enter at any moment and find him with the victim's body, Otto hurriedly hid the body, and fled from the shop. He turned a corner without being observed. He was safe and in the clear! He had disposed of his rival, and Greta would soon be compelled to accept his marriage poposal in the absence of Otto's only rival!

In the days that followed, there was no sign of Hugo. His young apprentice named Roger took over management of the shop. There was much speculation among the townspeople as to what could have happened to Hugo, and some said that he had probably just gotten tired of his work and the slow, unexciting life in this Hungarian town, and had left the country. Anyway, there was nothing to be done and young Roger con-

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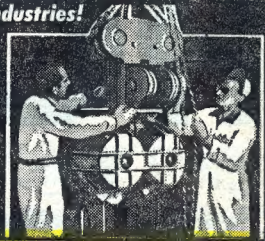

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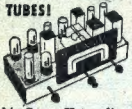

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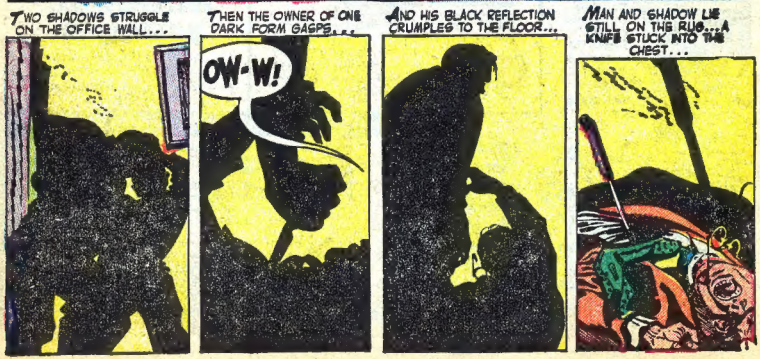
LOOKS LIKE MARY IS **STUCK** WITH A HUSBAND, WHETHER SHE LIKES IT OR NOT! NOW WE WONDER HOW MANY OF YOU ARE FOND OF INVENTING THINGS? WELL, BEN'S RIVAL INVENTED SOMETHING AND MADE A FORTUNE...AND BEN INTENDED TO GET **HIS** SHARE! BUT HE REAPED SOMETHING ELSE HE **HADN'T** COUNTED ON!

HOW?

BEN! BEN BROCK! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE...PUT IT DOWN!
I WILL, GILBERT ...DEEP DOWN INTO YOUR HEART!
FUTURA FOUNTAIN PEN "THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF"
THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF
A MYSTERY TALE TO SHOCK YOUR SENSES!
PAUL RINMAN


TWO SHADOWS STRUGGLE ON THE OFFICE WALL...
THEN THE OWNER OF ONE DARK FORM GASPS...
OW-W!
AND HIS BLACK REFLECTION CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR...
MAN AND SHADOW LIE STILL ON THE RUG...A KNIFE STUCK INTO THE CHEST...

YOU'VE KILLED HIM, BEN BROCK... KILLED GILBERT MEEKER, THE MAN WHOM YOU RIDICULED WHEN HE WAS A NOBODY... THE MAN YOU CAME CRAWLING TO AFTER HE HAD MADE HIS FORTUNE... THE MAN WHO GAVE YOU A JOB...
BUT IT'LL BE MY FORTUNE NOW! A FORTUNE HE MADE BY INVENTING AN INKLESS FOUNTAIN PEN AND A STUPID SLOGAN...THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF! BAH!
BUT NOW, GILBERT, YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE A SUICIDE NOTE.. AND A WILL, LEAVING EVERYTHING TO ME, YOUR TRUSTED FRIEND AND EMPLOYEE! SO YOU DON'T MIND IF I BORROW YOUR FOUNTAIN PEN, DO YOU, GILBERT... AND A PIECE OF YOUR PRIVATE MONOGRAMMED STATIONERY!
YOU START TO WRITE, BEN...THEN YOU STOP AND YOU LOOK AT THE FOUNTAIN PEN IN YOUR HAND...ONE OF GILBERT'S FUTURA FOUNTAIN PENS...
YOUR MEMORY TAKES YOU BACK TO THOSE DAYS MANY YEARS AGO, BEN ...WHEN YOU, GILBERT, AND A GROUP OF OTHER INVENTORS WORKED IN THE SAME SHOP...
CRIPES! TO THINK THAT A GADGET LIKE THIS FOUNTAIN PEN GILBERT INVENTED MADE HIM MILLIONS... WHILE I'VE BEEN WORKING ON BIG PROJECTS FOR YEARS, AN' NEVER MADE A PENNY! AN' I CAN REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN GILBERT DIDN'T HAVE A PENNY, TOO!
YOU SAY, YOU'VE FINISHED YOUR INVENTION, BEN ...BUT WHAT IS IT?
IT'S A HUMACLEANER! LET'S SAY THAT A MAN HAS AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT! BUT HE'S TIRED, DIRTY, HIS SHOES NEED A SHINE, HIS CLOTHES ARE BAGGY, AND HE NEEDS A SHOWER! ALL HE DOES IS STEP INSIDE THE HUMACLEANER...AN' PRESTO IN A FEW MINUTES HE COMES OUT CLEAN, FRESH, HAIR COMBED, SUIT CLEANED AND PRESSED, SHOES SHINED AND EVEN A FLOWER IN HIS BUTTON HOLE!
BUT WILL IT WORK?
SURE IT WILL! IT'S READY FOR A TEST NOW! ALL I NEED IS A DIRTY GUY WITH BAGGY PANTS...AN' GILBERT MEEKER'S THE GUY! COME HERE GILBERT!
NO...NO, PLEASE, BEN, I HAVE WORK TO DO!
AW, THAT INKLESS FOUNTAIN PEN OF YOURS IS A WASTE OF TIME... AN' THIS WAY YOU'LL GET A BATH ...AN' YOUR PANTS PRESSED FOR FREE! GET IN!
OKAY...NOW I TURN ON THE SWITCH...AN' THE HUMACLEANER GOES TO WORK...ONLY WITH GILBERT IT MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE!
ON-N-N!

YOU LAUGH NOW, BEN, AS YOU RECALL HOW GILBERT SCREAMED...
OW-W-W-W!
REMEMBER HOW HE BEGGED YOU TO LET HIM OUT?
BEN! PLEASE LET ME OUT! PLEASE!!
AND WHEN YOU DID... ALL OF YOU HOWLED AT THE S.O.B...
GILBERT MEEKER STOOD THERE WET, SHIVERING, BRUISED... AND HIS CLOTHES TORN TO SHREDS...
IT WAS ALL A GAG... AND YOU WERE THE JOKER OF THE GROUP, BEN! YOU WERE ALWAYS THINKING UP WAYS TO MAKE GILBERT'S LIFE MISERABLE! BUT THEN ONE DAY HE MADE YOURS MISERABLE... WHEN SOME BUSINESS MEN CAME TO SEE HIM ABOUT HIS INKLESS FOUNTAIN PEN..
IT DOESN'T USE INK, BUT IT WRITES!
IT HAS NO POINT!
IT'S TERRIFIC!
MR. MEEKER, WE WANT YOUR PERMISSION TO PUT THIS PEN ON THE MARKET! YOU'LL GET A DOLLAR ROYALTY ON EACH PEN MADE... AND WE'LL MAKE ABOUT 5 MILLION THE FIRST YEAR!
FIVE MILLION? OH GOODNESS!
EVERYBODY CONGRATULATED GILBERT... EVERYBODY BUT YOU, BEN... YOU CURSED HIM... AND YOU DID IT EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR...
AND AFTER THAT YEAR WAS OVER, YOU ALMOST HAD A FIT WHEN GILBERT HAD HIS OWN FACTORY BUILT TO MANUFACTURE HIS FAMOUS FOUNTAIN PEN...
STUPID LUCK, THAT'S WHAT IT IS! I WORK ON IMPORTANT INVENTIONS.. BIG THINGS... AND SOMEDAY THEY'LL WORK... BUT I GET NOTHING FOR IT! AND GILBERT... THE BRAINLESS JERK, HE INVENTS A LITTLE GADGET LIKE THAT FOUNTAIN PEN AND MAKES MILLIONS OUT OF IT! LUCK... STUPID LUCK!!
THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF... HA! THAT SLOGAN'S AS STUPID AS GILBERT! YEAH.. GILBERT IS STUPID... STUPID ENOUGH TO HAVE HIS MONEY TAKEN AWAY... AN' I'M THE GUY SMART ENOUGH TO DO IT!
FUTURA FOUNTAIN PEN CO.
THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF

SO YOU WENT CRAWLING TO GILBERT...YOU WERE VERY MEEK AND HUMBLE! YOU BEGGED HIS FORGIVENESS FOR THE WAY YOU USED TO TREAT HIM, YOU INVENTED A SICK SISTER, A DYING GRANDMOTHER...
YOU..YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT (SOB!) I...I CAN TURN TO, GILBERT...
GET UP OFF YOUR KNEES, BEN! MY...MY ALL THAT MISFORTUNE AND YOU TOO PROUD TO COME TO ME SOONER! HERE TAKE THIS MONEY!
AND WHEN YOU GET YOUR FAMILY AND YOURSELF ON YOUR FEET, BEN, COME BACK HERE...I'LL HAVE A GOOD JOB WAITING FOR YOU!
OH, THANK YOU, GILBERT...YOU... YOU'RE SO KIND!
PRIVATE
...AND SUCH A STUPID JERK!
F.U
SURE YOU CAME BACK A FEW DAYS LATER, BEN...AFTER ALL THAT WAS PART OF YOUR SCHEME, AND YOU WORKED HARD... THAT WAS ANOTHER PART OF YOUR SCHEME . . .
STAYING LATE AGAIN, BEN? YOU SHOULDN'T WORK SO HARD!
I DON'T MIND, GILBERT...IT'S A PLEASURE TO WORK FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU!
THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF
OH YOU BUTTERED HIM UP GOOD, BEN...BUT IF HE ONLY KNEW WHAT YOU REALLY WORKED ON ALL THOSE NIGHTS YOU STAYED SO LATE...
HIS HANDWRITING AND HIS SIGNATURE... I'VE PRACTISED SO MUCH I CAN WRITE MORE LIKE GILBERT MEEKER THAN HE CAN! NOW I'M READY FOR THE NEXT MOVE!
AND THE NEXT MOVE WAS... MURDER! THAT'S THE MOVE YOU COMPLETED TONIGHT, BEN...
OW-W!
GILBERT IS FINISHED...AND SO IS THE SUICIDE NOTE AND THE WILL WRITTEN WITH GILBERT'S PEN...ON HIS STATIONERY AND IN A PERFECT DUPLICATE OF GILBERT'S HANDWRITING!
To Whom It may Concern:
I am tired of life... so I choose to depart from it by my own hand having no relatives I leave my fortune my factory, all my possessions to my good friend Ben Brooks
Gilbert Meeker
YOU DON'T FORGET THE SMALLEST DETAIL, DO YOU, BEN? YOU RETURN THE FOUNTAIN PEN TO GILBERT'S POCKET...YOU PUT THE SUICIDE NOTE ON THE DESK... YOU STRAIGHTEN UP THE OFFICE...
GOOD NIGHT, MR MEEKER... HA! HA!
4

IT'S A NIGHT TO CELEBRATE, ISN'T IT, BEN? SO WHEN YOU GET HOME YOU OPEN UP THAT BOTTLE YOU'VE BEEN SAVING FOR THIS OCCASION!
AH-H, HERE'S TO GILBERT'S MILLIONS ...MY MILLIONS! HERE'S TO GILBERT'S FACTORY...MY FACTORY. ALL MINE TOMORROW...ALL MINE!
YOU DRINK QUITE A FEW TOASTS .. AND YOU'RE IN A GAY MOOD WHEN THERE'S A KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR. YOU YELL OUT A CHEERY INVITATION. BUT YOU'RE NOT SO CHEERY WHEN YOU SEE WHOM YOU'VE INVITED IN...
COPS! WHAT DO YOU WANT?
BEN BROCK, FOR THE MURDER OF GILBERT MEEKER!
I DIDN'T DO IT! YOU YOU CAN'T PROVE IT!
WE'VE GOT THE BEST PROOF IN THE WORLD! COME ON, WE'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!
IN THE POLICE CAR YOU KEEP ASKING YOURSELF QUESTIONS, BEN...HOW? HOW? HOW DID THEY FIND OUT?
HOW COULD THEY KNOW? HOW COULD I HAVE SLIPPED UP? HOW DO THEY KNOW? HOW? HOW?
POLICE DEPT.
AND WHEN THEY GET YOU TO GILBERT'S FACTORY... THEY SHOW YOU..
THERE'S THE PROOF! NOW DO YOU DENY IT?
SURE I DENY IT! HE'S DEAD. BUT THAT DOESN'T PROVE I KILLED HIM!
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE BODY...IT'S THE NOTE I MEAN! HERE READ IT!
"GM"
To whom it may concern: I am tired of life. So I choose to depart from it by my own hand. Having no relatives I leave my fortune, my factory & all my possessions to my good friend Ben Brock. Gilbert Meeker
P.S. the above is a forgery written by the man who killed me. Ben Brock
Gilbert Meeker
IT'S IN GILBERT MEEKER'S HANDWRITING... WE CHECKED IT! COME ON, BROCK! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR MURDER!
YEAH... YEAH... I... DID IT! BUT... BUT HOW DID HE WRITE THAT NOTE? HE'S DEAD! HOW DID HE DO IT? HOW? HOW? HOW?
IF YOU'D TURN AROUND BEN, AND TAKE ONE LAST LOOK .. YOU'D GET THE ANSWER TO.. HOW?
FUTURA FOUNTAIN PEN CO
THE PEN THAT WRITES BY ITSELF
THE END
5

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tinued to do the repair work on watches and clocks of Hugo's former clients. A month after Hugo's disappearance, Otto once more asked Greta to be his bride. The poor girl feared she would become a neglected spinster if she turned down this proposal now, so she consented. And so Greta and Otto were married.

Greta had always known Otto to be a quick-tempered man, but this strange attitude he displayed after the wedding was something new. Otto had suddenly turned into a moody, brooding, almost half-mad man. Something was preying on his mind and she could not figure out what it was. Shortly after their marriage, Otto declared he must leave town for a week's business trip. Greta was glad to see him go, because his brooding and half-insane actions were making her nervous and upset. During that week when Otto was absent, Greta decided to pay a visit to Hugo's shop. She knew, of course, that she would only find Roger there, but still she wanted to recall memories of the young man she had loved. She came into the shop and greeted Roger. Then she looked around at the various clocks that were for sale, and that's when she saw me!

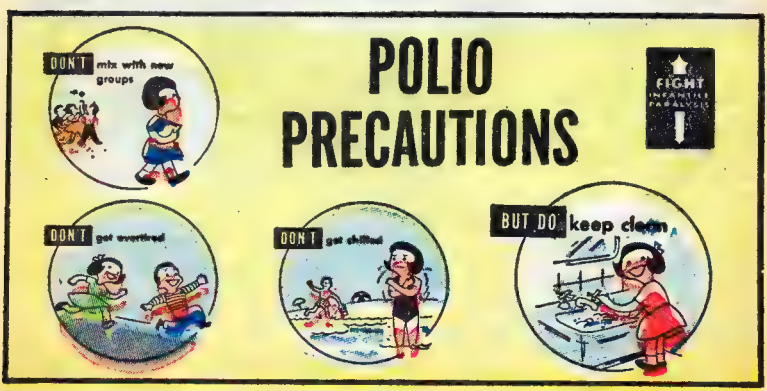
I was a tall, wide grandfather's clock. Greta said I was just what she wanted for the front hall of her new home. She paid Roger, who promised to deliver me the next day. And so it was done. Greta was pleased to see me and welcomed me as a new decoration piece for her new mansion. But her pleasure was not to last very long. When Otto returned home from his business trip at the end of the week, he noticed me at once standing there in the front hall. I looked familiar to him. When he questioned Greta, she admitted she had bought me from Roger in Hugo Uticek's former shop. Otto was enraged! He ordered his wife to get rid of me by the end of the day. Then Otto slammed out of the house to go to his office for the rest of the afternoon.

I could see the determination in Greta's eyes. She had decided inwardly to keep me, no matter how much she had to argue with Otto about it! But matters were slowly but surely coming to a climax in that house. For during the day my insides stopped working. Greta called Roger and he promised to stop in that evening on his way home to supper. Roger arrived after six and removed his repair tools from his bag. He was just beginning to open my back to examine me, when Otto entered the front door! Otto screamed for him to stop, but it was too late! My back was opened up, and the corpse of Hugo Uticek fell to the floor in front of their horrified eyes! Yes, the killer Otto Korak had hidden the body of his victim in the clock!

So, you see, for a while *I* was a clock, because I was still alive, although unconscious, when Otto put my body into the clock. Later, I regained my senses, but because of shock, I couldn't speak or move! I really only died a few minutes before Roger opened the back of the clock case! Of course, my body had been starving for over a month!

Otto's fingerprints are on the cutting tool imbedded in my brain . . . I am now the Corpus Delicti. Soon I will go to whatever "Beyond" part-time clocks go to when they die. But when Otto Korak is hanged for my murder, *he'll* go to another place . . . a realm of sulphur and brimstone, where all evil sinners go!

THE END D-247



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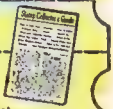

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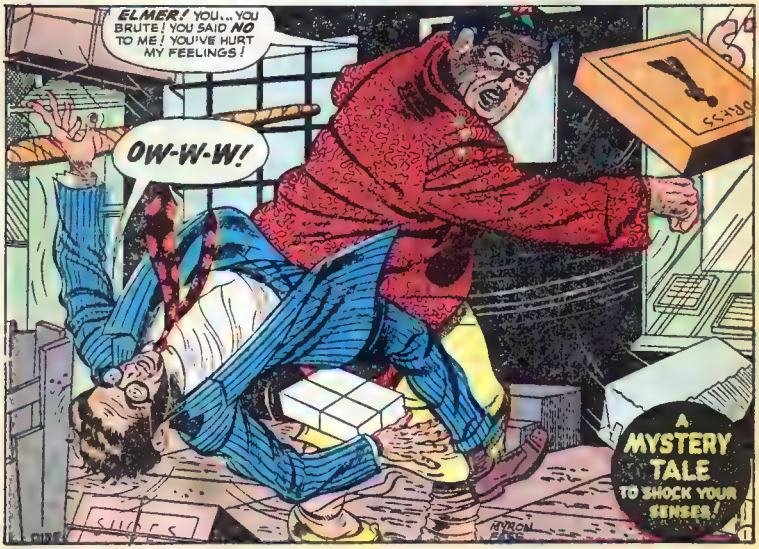
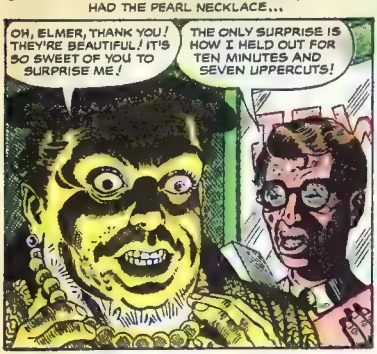
GENUINE ALLIGATOR

BERTHA WANTED EVERYTHING SHE LAID HER BIG, BLOOD-SHOT EYES ON...



SEVEN UPPERCUTS AND TEN MINUTES LATER, BERTHA HAD THE PEARL NECKLACE...


OH, ELMER, THANK YOU! THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL! IT'S SO SWEET OF YOU TO SURPRISE ME!
THE ONLY SURPRISE IS HOW I HELD OUT FOR TEN MINUTES AND SEVEN UPPERCUTS!

NO, ELMER WASN'T A MILLIONAIRE... ELMER HAD TO WORK OVERTIME TO MAKE THE MONEY TO PAY FOR ALL THOSE THINGS...

ELMER HAD TO WORK NIGHTS...

ELMER HAD TO TAKE AN EXTRA JOB ON SATURDAYS...

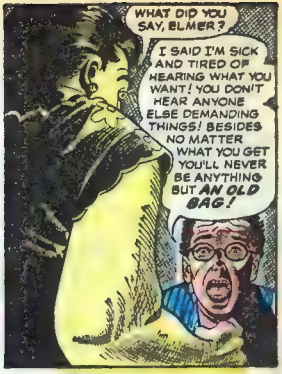
AND ON SUNDAYS HE SOLD POPCORN AT THE BASEBALL GAMES...

ELMER'S WIFE SPENT THE MONEY FASTER THAN ELMER COULD MAKE IT... AND EVERY DAY, SHE FOUND NEW WAYS TO SPEND IT...

THERE WAS MAYHEM IN BERTHA'S VOICE AND MURDER IN HER EYES... AND ELMER'S COURAGE WILTED LIKE A PETUNIA IN DECEMBER...

THE NEXT DAY THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO THE SUNNY SOUTH...

IN FLORIDA, THEY WENT EVERYWHERE AND SAW EVERYTHING... AND BERTHA WANTED EVERYTHING SHE SAW! ON A SIGHTSEEING BOAT ONE DAY, BERTHA POKED ELMER AND SAID...


WHAT DID YOU SAY, ELMER?
I SAID I'M SICK AND TIRED OF HEARING WHAT YOU WANT! YOU DON'T HEAR ANYONE ELSE DEMANDING THINGS! BESIDES NO MATTER WHAT YOU GET YOU'LL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT AN OLD BAG!

BERTHA SWUNG AT ELMER...

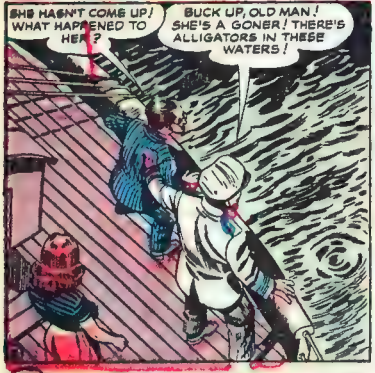
ELMER DUCKED...

AND BERTHA WENT FLYING OVER THE RAILING...

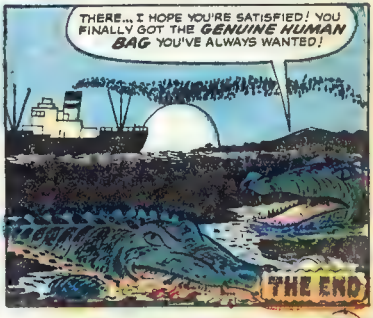
AND INTO THE WATER...

SHE HASN'T COME UP! WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?

BUCK UP, OLD MAN! SHE'S A GONER! THERE'S ALLIGATORS IN THESE WATERS!



AS THE CRUISE BOAT CONTINUED ON ITS WAY, ELMER LOOKED BACK... AND ON THE SHORE HE SAW TWO ALLIGATORS! ELMER'S NOT SURE, BUT HE THOUGHT HE HEARD ONE OF THE ALLIGATORS SAY...



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MAC PARKER

THEY LOVE YOU, LISE... EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM! THE INTERNATIONAL RIFFRAFF AND THE SLUMMERS! NOT ONE OF THEM SITS ON HIS HANDS WHEN YOUR ACT WHIRLS TO ITS FINALE!

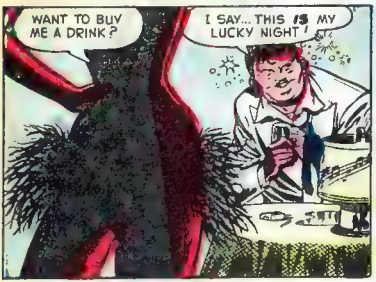
WONDERFUL!

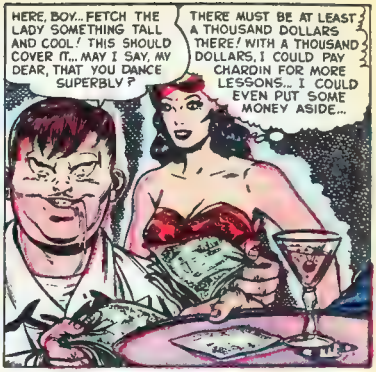
ENCORE! ENCORE!

WHY SHOULDN'T THEY LOVE YOU? FOR AS LITTLE AS THE PRICE OF A BEER, THEY'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE *POTENTIALLY GREATEST DANCER IN THE WHOLE WORLD!*

KEEP IT UP, SCUM... CLAP, WHISTLE, STAMP YOUR FEET OFF! THE SECOND I LAY MY HANDS ON ENOUGH MONEY, SINGAPORE WILL NEVER SEE ME DANCE AGAIN!

EVEN BEFORE THE APPLAUSE DIES DOWN, YOU CATCH THE BARTENDER'S WINK... AND YOU SEE HIM POINT TO THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT! THAT MEANS THE SUCKER'S POTTED AND HAS A BANKROLL... AND WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO NOW, LISE, COMES AS NATURALLY TO YOU AS DANCING...




HERE, BOY... FETCH THE LADY SOMETHING TALL AND COOL! THIS SHOULD COVER IT... MAY I SAY, MY DEAR, THAT YOU DANCE SUPERBLY?
THERE MUST BE AT LEAST A THOUSAND DOLLARS THERE! WITH A THOUSAND DOLLARS, I COULD PAY CHARDIN FOR MORE LESSONS... I COULD EVEN PUT SOME MONEY ASIDE...

IT IS AFTER MIDNIGHT, LISE, WHEN YOU LEAVE THE BLUE MOON, CLINGING TO THE ARM OF YOUR REELING VICTIM...

HE TOTTERS TOWARD YOU, HIS MOUTH CURVED IN A SLY, DRUNKEN SMILE...

HE'S CLOSER NOW! YOU'VE FOUND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR IN YOUR PURSE! THE DAGGER FLASHES IN THE MOONLIGHT! BUT YOUR VICTIM ONLY HAS EYES FOR YOU...

BUT NOW HE SEES! AND HE CRIES OUT IN HORROR!

BUT THIS IS SINGAPORE, THE CITY OF INTRIGUE AND MIDNIGHT VIOLENCE ...AND A CRY OF HORROR IS AS CUSTOMARY HERE AS A STRAY DOG'S BARK! NO ONE INTERFERES WITH THE DOWNWARD SLASH OF YOUR SHARP DAGGER AS IT CLEAVES SOFT FLESH!

YOU HAVE THE BANKROLL NOW, LISE! YOU'RE RUNNING THRU THE SHADOWY STREETS, CARRYING IT TO WHERE ALL YOUR "EXTRA" MONEY GOES...
AH... MY PUPIL! WHY HAVE I NOT SEEN YOU FOR SO LONG?
LOOK... MONEY! MONEY FOR MORE BALLET LESSONS! TEACH ME, CHARDIN... TEACH ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW!
YOU HAVE SO MUCH TALENT, MY CHILD! IF OLD CHARDIN DID NOT HAVE TO EAT HE WOULD GLADLY TEACH YOU FOR NOTHING... BUT YOU INSIST THAT I CUT OFF ALL MY OTHER PUPILS... THAT I DEVOTE MYSELF ONLY TO YOU! DANCE FOR ME, CHILD... DANCE FOR ME NOW!
BRAVO! BRAVO! YOU ARE SUPERB! IF ONLY YOU COULD LEAVE SINGAPORE, IN A SHORT TIME YOU WOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED THE BEST DANCER IN ALL THE WORLD!
BUT TO LEAVE, WE NEED MONEY, CHARDIN, MUCH MONEY... DOZENS OF OFFICIALS MUST BE BRIBED, PASSPORTS WILL HAVE TO BE FORGED! WE NEED MONEY FOR PASSAGE... MONEY TO ESTABLISH US IN A NEW COUNTRY!
YOUR TOES... YOUR STRONG, WHITE, BEAUTIFUL TOES... THEY WERE CREATED EXPRESSLY FOR THE DANCE!
YOU ARE TEMPESTUOUS, LISE... AND A SUDDEN SPURT OF FURY FINDS YOU GRIPPING THE MAESTRO'S THROAT!
IF I EVER FIND OUT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TELLING ME ALL THIS JUST TO GET MY MONEY, CHARDIN, I WILL KILL YOU ...YOU KNOW THAT!
PLEASE... I AM AN OLD MAN... DID I KNOW YOU COULD AFFORD TO PAY FOR MY FULL TIME WHEN YOU FIRST CAME FOR LESSONS? YOUR MAGNIFICENT TOES... BLAME THEM FOR MY ENTHUSIASM!
YOUR FURY SUBSIDES... AND SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, BACK AT THE CABARET, FOR THE FIRST TIME, LISE, YOU TAKE SERIOUS NOTICE OF THE MAN IN THE SHADOWS...
THIS IS HIS THIRD NIGHT HERE! WHO IS HE? HE SITS AS STILL AS A STATUE! HE KEEPS STARING...
5

MEN HAVE COME BACK TO WATCH YOU BEFORE...BUT NO ONE LIKE HIM! NO ONE WITH EYES THAT BURNED SO STEADILY! NO ONE WHO SAT LIKE A GRAVEN STATUE!
YOU ARE CURIOUS... YOU MAKE INQUIRIES...
HIM? HE'S LI WONG... BIG CHINESE PEARL MERCHANT! HE'S AT LEAST EIGHTY YEARS OLD! YEAH...HE'S STUCK ON YOU, LISE! HIS NUMBER ONE MAN TOLD ME!
H-HOW WEALTHY WOULD YOU SAY HE IS?
HE'S GOT MORE MONEY THAN A DOG'S GOT FLEAS! LAST I HEARD HE WAS WORTH AT LEAST FOUR MILLION DOLLARS!
FOUR MILLION DOLLARS! AND HE'S STUCK ON ME! IF I MARRIED HIM, HOW MUCH LONGER COULD HE LIVE? THEN ALL THAT MONEY WOULD BE MINE! CHARDIN WOULD COME WITH ME... I COULD LEAVE SINGAPORE FOREVER!
WITH ALL THAT MONEY, I COULD FORM MY OWN BALLET COMPANY! I WOULD BE THE PRIMA BALLERINA! THE GREATEST DANCER IN THE WORLD!
SUDDENLY, LISE, A HISSING VOICE CUTS YOUR REVERY SHORT!
MISS GLORIO... MY MASTER HUMBLY REQUESTS YOUR GRACIOUS PRESENCE AT HIS LOWLY TABLE...
MR. WONG GETS RIGHT TO THE POINT...
YOU ARE AS GRACEFUL AS A LOTUS FLOWER WAFTED BY A BREEZE! IN MY LAST YEARS OF LIFE, YOUR LOVING PRESENCE WOULD DELIGHT MY FINAL DAYS... BUT I MUST WARN YOU... I AM AN OLD-FASHIONED CHINESE! AS MY ESTEEMED WIFE, YOU WOULD HAVE TO DRESS ALWAYS AS OLD-FASHIONED CHINESE WOMAN...
4

WHAT'S SO HARD ABOUT DRESSING UP IN A BROCADED KIMONO? YOU CAN HARDLY KEEP YOURSELF FROM SHOUTING WITH JOY, AS YOU ACCEPT! A FEW DAYS AFTER, IN A BUDDHIST TEMPLE...
HE'LL LIVE TWO, THREE YEARS AT THE MOST!
YOU'RE IN YOUR NEW HUSBAND'S HOME NOW! HAND-MAIDENS HELP YOU DRESS LIKE AN OLD-FASHIONED CHINESE WOMAN...
HOW DO I LOOK?
LIKE A PERFECT PEARL! THE MASTER WILL BE OVERJOYED!
YOU'RE STANDING BEFORE YOUR HUSBAND NOW, WAITING FOR HIS APPROVAL... BUT HIS EYES ARE STRANGELY COLD!
W-WHAT'S THE MATTER?
AT FIRST HE DOES NOT ANSWER... INSTEAD HE HISSES IN CHINESE TO TWO OF HIS SERVANTS! THEN HE TURNS TO YOU...
I AM DISPLEASED... YOUR COSTUME IS INCOMPLETE! I HAVE INSTRUCTED MY SERVANTS HOW TO HELP YOU COMPLETE IT! GO WITH THEM!
YOU SHRUG, PUZZLEDLY, AND FOLLOW THE TWO SERVANTS THRU A SHADOWY HALLWAY...
I'LL HAVE A DANCE STUDIO BUILT RIGHT HERE IN THE HOUSE! CHARDIN WILL LIVE NEARBY, AND I'LL PRACTICE MY DANCING EVERY DAY!
BUT THEN YOU ENTER THE ROOM WHERE YOUR COSTUME IS TO BE COMPLETED, AND YOU RECOIL IN HORROR!
W-WHAT'S THAT? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?
IT IS NOTHING, LOVELY MISTRESS! THIS VISE WILL MERELY CRUSH YOUR TOES SO YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WEAR TINY, OLD-FASHIONED CHINESE SLIPPERS!
AIEEEEE! NO! NO!
DO NOT FRET, MY LOTUS FLOWER! WE SHALL GIVE YOU AN OPIATE TO DULL THE PAIN! AND ONCE IT IS DONE, AS MY HONORED WIFE, EVERYTHING THAT YOU EVER DESIRED WILL BE YOURS!
THE END

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POOR LISE! HER HUSBAND MAKES A "SQUEEZE" PLAY, AND THE DANCER'S CAREER IS OUT... FOR GOOD! NOW FOR A GRAND FINALE THAT REALLY PACKS A WALLOP, MEET ROGER, A SHY GUY WITH EYES ONLY FOR KAREN! BUT THIS GAL HAS HER OWN IDEA OF WHEN A MAN'S A MAN!

THERE'S NO PLEASIN' SOME GALS!

A MYSTERY TALE TO SHOCK YOUR SENSES!

C-975

ROGER PUTNAM, PROFESSOR OF PREHISTORIC TIMES, JUMPED AT THE CHANCE TO ACCOMPANY THE UNIVERSITY'S ARCHEOLOGICAL GROUP IN UNCOVERING A CAVE MAN'S HOME IN THE FRENCH ALPS... FOR KAREN LEWISON WAS GOING ALONG...

WELL, TOMORROW WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY BACK TO THE STATES!
YOU SEEM TO BE A MILLION MILES AWAY, MISS LEWISON...
A MILLION YEARS... MEN REALLY MUST HAVE BEEN MEN IN THOSE DAYS!

ROGER WAS SMITTEN WITH KAREN, BUT HIS SHY, TWIN, STUDIOUS APPEARANCE MADE NO IMPRESSION UPON HER...

KAREN...ER...MISS LEWISON, I...I HOPE WE CAN SEE MORE OF EACH OTHER BACK AT THE UNIVERSITY!
OH, PLEASE, PUTNAM! HEAVENS, HOW OVERWHELMINGLY POWERFUL THEY WERE...IF ONLY MEN WERE LIKE THAT TODAY!

THE OCEAN VOYAGE BACK WAS A COMPLETE FRUSTRATION TO ROGER! TRY AS HE WOULD, HE COULD NOT DENT THE EXTERIOR OF KAREN! IN FACT, HE *ANNOYED* HER...

PLEASE, PUTNAM, DON'T BOTHER ME! YOU'D DO WELL TO STUDY YOUR CAVE MAN HISTORY! PERHAPS YOU'D DISCOVER HOW A *MAN* WAS AND *SHOULD BE!*

WELL...ER...ONLY REMARKED HOW LOVELY THE OCEAN IS...

AS NIGHT FELL UPON THE HOME-BOUND SHIP...

MISS LEWISON...ER.. WOULD YOU...CARE TO...ER...DANCE...?

WHY DON'T YOU STOP ANNOYING ME? YOU'RE A COMPLETE BORE... A NONENTITY! *GO AWAY!*

OH, YOU WONDERFUL MAN... HOW I WISH I KNEW YOU WHEN YOU WERE LIVING! TO FEEL THE STRENGTH OF YOUR ARMS AROUND ME...

IF ONLY SHE'D RECOGNIZE MY LOVE FOR HER! I LOVE HER MADLY!

BACK AT THE UNIVERSITY, ROGER STILL TRIED, BUT TO NO AVAIL! KAREN BRUSHED HIM OFF IN A CONVINCING MANNER AFTER CLASS ONE DAY...

MISS LEWISON...TONIGHT IS THE PROFESSOR'S BALL ...WOULD YOU...ER... ACCOM...

GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU...YOU PUNY MALE! WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO BECOME A *MAN?*

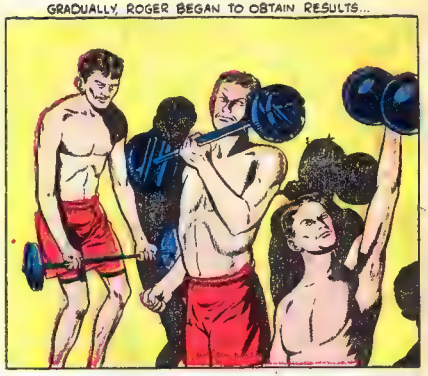
ALONE IN HIS ROOM, ROGER WAS READY TO ADMIT DEFEAT, WHEN HIS EYE HIT UPON A MAGAZINE AD...

I'LL DO IT! I'LL SHOW HER I CAN BECOME A MUSCLE MAN!

LET SAMSON BUILD YOU A MUSCLE BOD!

AND SO THE EQUIPMENT ARRIVED! ROGER WENT TO WORK DILIGENTLY EVERY EVENING...

GRADUALLY, ROGER BEGAN TO OBTAIN RESULTS...

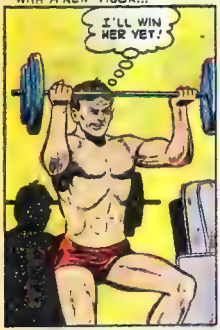


WEEKS LATER, ROGER'S CONFIDENCE IMPROVED ALONG WITH HIS BODY...

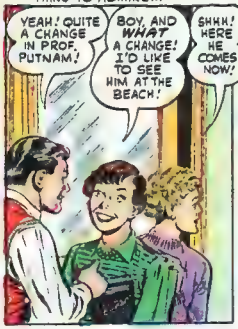
THE NEXT DAY, ROGER FOUND KAREN IN THE CAVE MAN ROOM OF THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM...

WHAT? WHY, YOU LITTLE MAN! HOW DARE YOU TRY TO COMPETE WITH MY IDEAL! WHERE COULD YOU HOPE TO ATTAIN THE MASSIVE STRENGTH OF SO HEROIC A FIGURE?!

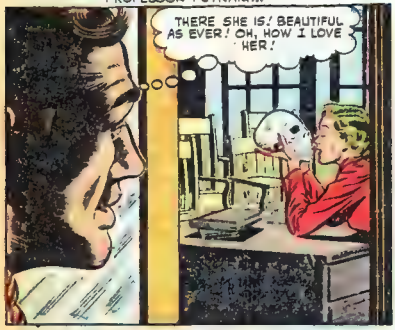
REBUFFED AGAIN, ROGER CONTINUED HIS EXERCISES WITH A NEW VIGOR...

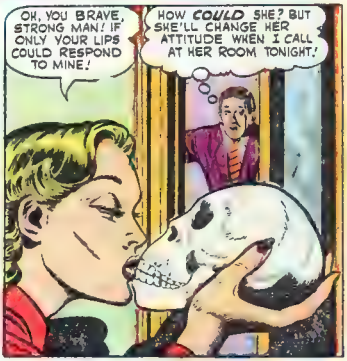


AND AS THE DAYS WENT BY, ROGER'S PHYSIQUE BECAME A THING TO ADMIRE...



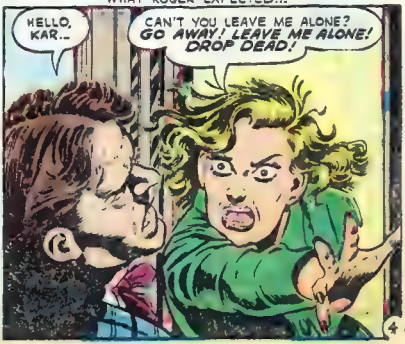
BUT KAREN FOUND NOTHING TO ADMIRE IN THE NEW PROFESSOR PUTNAM...

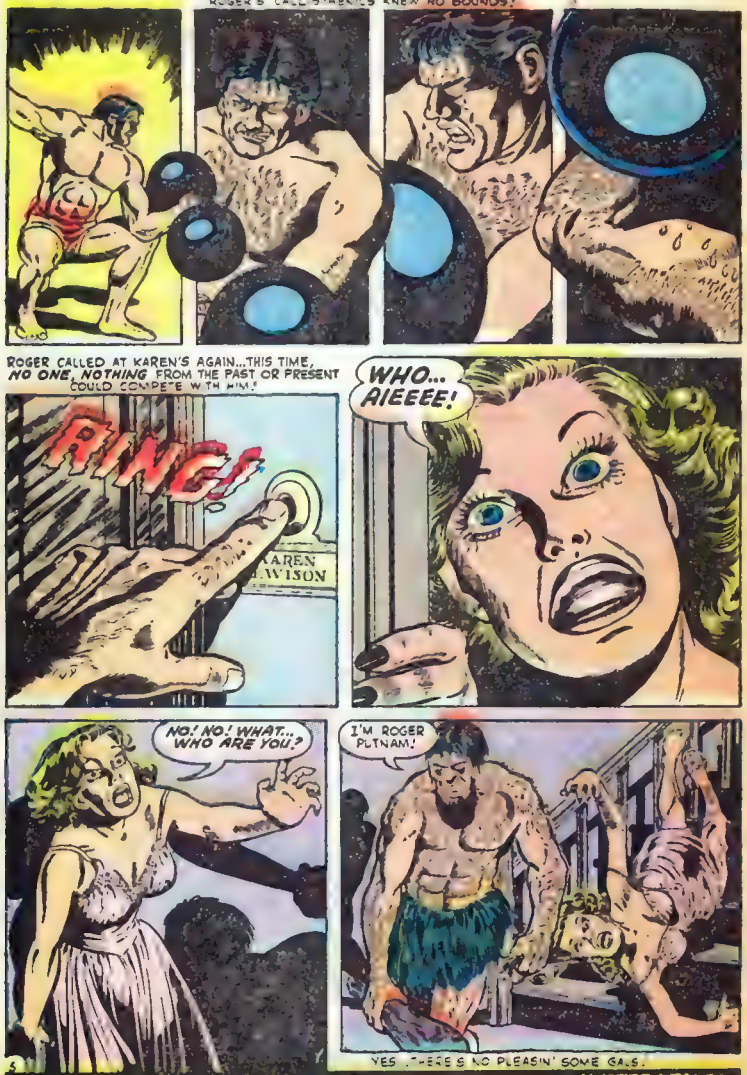



OH, YOU BRAVE, STRONG MAN! IF ONLY YOUR LIPS COULD RESPOND TO MINE!
HOW COULD SHE? BUT SHE'LL CHANGE HER ATTITUDE WHEN I CALL AT HER ROOM TONIGHT!

THAT NIGHT...

BUT KAREN'S GREETING AS SHE OPENED THE DOOR WASN'T WHAT ROGER EXPECTED...




WITH A FRENZIED DETERMINATION THAT NOTHING FROM OUT OF THE PAST WOULD OFFER HIM ANY COMPETITION, ROGER'S CALISTHENICS KNEW NO BOUNDS!
ROGER CALLED AT KAREN'S AGAIN...THIS TIME, NO ONE, NOTHING FROM THE PAST OR PRESENT COULD COMPETE WITH HIM!
RING!
KAREN LEWISON
WHO... AIEEEE!
NO! NO! WHAT... WHO ARE YOU?
I'M ROGER PUTNAM!
YES, THERE'S NO PLEASIN' SOME GALS.
WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR YOU WHEN THE NEXT SPINE-CHILLING ISSUE OF MYSTERY TALES APPEARS ON YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND! YOU'LL BE THRILLED BY "THE MOVIE HOUSE HORROR" PLUS MANY OTHER DELIGHTFUL WEIRDIES! BE SEEING YOU!

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RUSH ABSOLUTELY FREE the big, valuable Harford Frocks Style Display so I can start quickly getting personal dresses without paying one penny for them, and make extra money in spare time besides.

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Dress Size _____ Age _____

NEW! 1953 "Space Commander"

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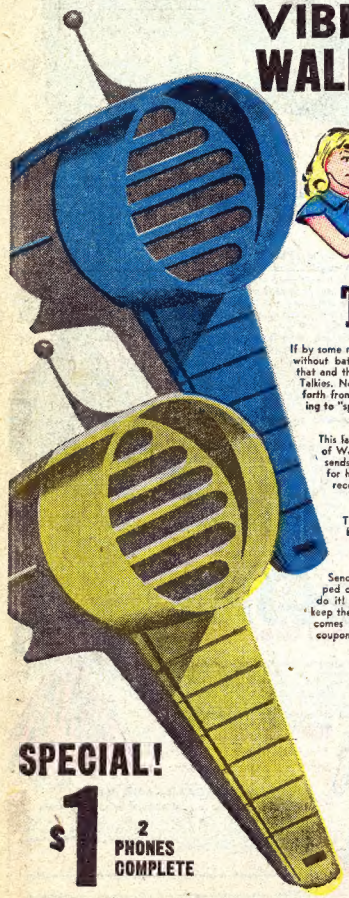
2 PHONES ONLY $1



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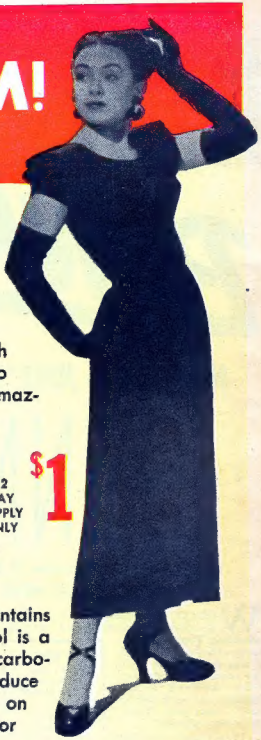

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